



**As Possessing All Things  
All Saints Sisters of the Poor  
Centenary—America  
1872 • 1972**

**As Possessing All Things  
All Saints Sisters of the Poor.  
The account of their first  
hundred years in America.**



*Grateful acknowledgement is made to Miss Marie L. Barnes, a much-loved and esteemed Associate and friend who proofread the written text of this book and was responsible for all of the contemporary pictures contained herein.*

*To the Glory of God  
and in Thanksgiving  
for all saints  
known and unknown*



## AS POSSESSING ALL THINGS

BALTIMORE, Maryland, December 12, 1872. Three black-habited English Sisters stepped off the train from New York, strangers in a city they had never seen.

The year of our Lord 1872 hardly seems a time to look for the kind of Christian love and dedication that will cross an ocean to serve the poor because they are His children. The year 1872 is mid-Victorian—Her Majesty was in the 35th year of her reign—and we do not think of the mid-Victorian era as a time of adventurous self-sacrifice. In 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant was elected for his ill-omened second term. It was the era which Mark Twain, in the novel he published in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner the next year, dubbed “The Gilded Age,” an age concerned with superficiality, not an age in which to find women casting aside the surface comforts and beauties of life in order to rejoice in eternal truth.

And yet the three English Sisters were far from being lonely and unsupported oddities. They were a tiny shoot sent out from a sturdily growing young tree. It was this Victorian era, this gilded age of the bustle and the beaded portiere, which saw the rebirth of Religious Orders in the Anglican church and their first amazing growth. Among the women’s Orders, the Society of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor was one of the earliest to be established. The Mother Foundress, Harriet Brownlow Byron, “left the world” on St. Luke’s Day 1851. It was not an impulsive or unconsidered move by a romantic girl. She was in her early thirties; she had visited the Park Village Sisterhood, founded in London six years earlier under the guidance of Dr. Pusey; she had visited Roman Catholic Sisterhoods in Paris and Belgium; and she had the guidance and encouragement of her priest, Father William Upton Richards (soon to be Vicar of All Saints’, Margaret Street, although in 1851 that church was still in construction). At Father Richards’ suggestion, Miss Byron had taken the decidedly practical step of going through a course of nursing training at King’s College Hospital.

When Mother Harriet left the world, she moved to a small house on Mortimer Street to take charge of a household of two incurable women and three orphans. Concern for aging women and for needy children still characterizes the Society. In the earliest days, emphasis went first to caring for such needy ones. The needs were great. Charles Dickens was still writing, and the conditions he described were still in existence. Indeed, there was something Dickensian about the first six months in the house in Mortimer Street, when Mother Harriet did almost all the housework (though one of the “incurables”—her disease was tuberculosis—did the cooking!), and the principal means of support was begging at the service entrances of the homes of the well-to-do. Mother Harriet later declared that she found these begging expeditions, accompanied by the orphans, “great fun,” but confessed she did wonder at times whether she would meet some of her fashionable acquaintances as she left their back doors with laden baskets.

The status of women then was also as Dickens described it. It is very hard for us to realize what a pioneering venture it was for a woman to undertake

this new way of life in 1851, what shock it caused, what difficulties and social pressures there were to overcome, what courage and strength were required to succeed. One of the clippings treasured in the Society's archives is an obituary of the Mother Foundress which speaks respectfully of "the massive strength of will behind that weak form and gentle manner." That massive strength and concomitant gentleness had developed together during 30 years' service as Mother Superior before that was written. But the basis must have been there when she struck out alone, responding to the call of God.

She was alone with her strange family for six months; during that time one of the incurable women died. Then a Postulant joined her, and then another. When the group she headed had grown to five tested Sisters, it was formally organized and the Foundress, with the approval of the Bishop of the diocese, was installed on August 4, 1856, as Reverend Mother Superior for life. Another three years passed before the formal Rule and Statutes were adopted. The Rule was based on the Augustinian Rule; and many of the early customs of the Society were learned from the Sisterhoods which the Mother Foundress had visited on the Continent. At first both the Rule and the customs were tentative; they grew with the life of the Society, as its spirit and purpose became more clearly defined.

The Society was blessed in the stability given by having its first 20 years watched over by its Founders. Father William Upton Richards served as Chaplain General until his death on June 16, 1873. An obituary credits him with three outstanding characteristics, "simplicity of aim and character, a most winning affectionateness, and having in a remarkable degree the gift of practical wisdom," undergirded by a deep and unwavering trust in God. One would like to hope that the Society may have been lastingly marked by his influence.

Before he died, the earliest experimental stage had been worked through, and the line of growth discovered. The first two decades had been marked by some episodes of dramatic service, mostly in connection with nursing, a field in which the Society was deeply interested. In 1860, at the invitation of no less a person than Sir William Jenner, the Sisters had been given the opportunity to take over the nursing, first of two wards, then of the whole of University College Hospital in London. This was the same year in which the "Nightingale Fund" Training School was established at St. Thomas' Hospital. The All Saints Sisters followed Miss Nightingale's footsteps in training nurses to a professional standard. This work in University College Hospital continued until 1898. A number of the Sisters were trained as nurses; and during the 1860's, on several occasions when a cholera or smallpox epidemic broke out, Sisters were sent to help with the nursing, not only in London but as far as Devon and Manchester. In 1870 the Franco-Prussian War brought a cry for help from the Continent, and the All Saints Sisters were among those who responded. The Reverend Mother led a contingent of six Sisters, who worked in Paris from September of 1870 to February of the next year.

By contrast, the 1870's, though a time of amazing growth and expansion, found the Society guided in more sharply defined channels. Father William Upton Richards' death in 1873 changed the relationship with All Saints parish. The Society had never been a "parish agency," but the connection



had been so close and long-standing that it must have seemed so. Now, though cordiality continued, the Chaplain General elected to succeed Father William Upton Richards was not the new Rector of All Saints, but the saintly Religious and founder of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, Father Richard Mieux Benson. The life of the Religious community was given precedence over the position in the parish. The time was soon to come when an observer would write of their work "that it is not hindered but advanced by being made subsidiary to the Life." The work from now on was chiefly parish work and the maintenance of their established institutions: St. Elizabeth's Home for Aged Women, occupying the first house on Mortimer Street; an Orphanage; a Home for Little Incurable Boys; a convalescent hospital at Eastbourne which had grown out of the continuing work at University College Hospital; a Mission House at Edinburgh, and others. Requests came from many places and from all directions for Sisters to work in parishes. In 1872 one request came across the Atlantic from the United States.

THE MOTHER FOUNDESS had often been asked to undertake foreign mission work, but it was not until 1872 that she felt able to respond to that call. In that year the Reverend Joseph Richey, Rector of Mount Calvary Church in Baltimore, begged her to send Sisters "to help him in his difficult work." He wrote at the suggestion of Father Charles C. Grafton, later Bishop of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, but at this time a member of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist and stationed in Boston, Massachusetts. Father Richey had obtained the consent of his Bishop, William Whittingham, before he made his request, so if Sisters were sent they would come with the approval of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

The Mother Foundress felt that a special effort should be made to answer this call. At the great Chapter held after the autumn retreat of 1872 she announced to the community that she had undertaken work in America and named the Sisters whom she had chosen: Sister Helen, Sister Serena, and Sister Winifred. Sister Helen had been several years professed, had had nursing training at University College Hospital, and had been one of those with the Mother Foundress in the Franco-Prussian War. She was named to be the Sister-in-charge of the new work. Sister Serena and Sister Winifred had been professed only a short time, and this announcement of their names in the Chapter was their first news of the Mother Foundress' intention to send them to a new foundation in a distant land. It was announced that they would be sailing the following week! Such secrecy appears to have been customary in those days.

These were the first All Saints Sisters to set off overseas. Later, works in South Africa and India made such occasions frequent. But this, the first, made history. All the Sisters and Novices who were at home in the Mother House in Margaret Street stood in a row in the cloister to say goodbye. Father Richards gave each of the three Sisters his blessing, and went to the station to see them off.

They sailed from Liverpool, on the *Celtic*, November 28, 1872. The crossing took 12 days, and they landed in New York on December 10, a bitterly cold day with a keen wind blowing. The Sisters were accustomed to cold weather. In those days there was no heat provided in their Convent ex-

cept small coal fires in the parlors, lit only when the parlors were in actual use. If they considered the day to be "bitterly cold," it was. And the descriptive note confirms it: Icicles hung on the ship's rigging and on the sailors' beards.

The Reverend Father Richey had come up from Baltimore to meet them. His warm greeting, kind manner, and priestly dignity made a happy impression on the three Sisters. He took them at once to the then Mother House of the Community of St. Mary on Forty-Sixth Street. This hospitality of the Sisters of St. Mary was the first knot of a long friendship binding the two communities.

During their brief visit in New York, Father Grafton, S.S.J.E., came to see them and agreed to act as their spiritual director, as far as that was possible, considering the distance between Boston and Baltimore.

When, after the long ride on the train from New York, they at last reached Baltimore, Father Richey, who had returned before them, again met them. Now his news was bad: he had not been able to find a suitable house for them, and they would have to lodge temporarily with a lady of his congregation. The inconvenience and delay of this was offset by the making of two firm friends, Miss Margaret Harrison, the kind hostess, and her niece Miss Oliver, who became a special benefactress of their later work among the colored people.

The new year brought the first house: an eight-roomed house at 85 Preston Street, rather too far from Mount Calvary Church to be convenient in those days, but quiet and secluded. There was plenty to be done to get the house in order. Visitors came and were astonished to find the Sisters scrubbing and cleaning. Gifts of food and furniture came, and it was found possible to have the house formally opened and blessed, as All Saints Mission Home, on January 23, 1873. The altar given for the Chapel was one at which Father Benson, S.S.J.E., had said Mass on his first visit to Baltimore in September 1871.

The opening days of the new Mission Home were discouraging and difficult in many ways. The Sisters had happened to come in a very cold winter. The unpaved streets were sometimes rivers of melting snow which could be crossed only on high stepping-stones, and sometimes they were sheets of ice. Often it was impossible to get to church without falling many times on the way. The boarding school for Southern girls of which Father Richey dreamed (his curate, the Reverend Calbraith Perry, called it "the darling wish of his heart") could not be begun under such circumstances. The parish provided plenty of work for the Sisters, however, in visiting the poor and meeting some of the needs they discovered. Sister Serena gave instructions to women and girls in the Lenten confirmation classes at Mount Calvary; and plans were being made for the Sisters to help in the work with a colored congregation which the Mount Calvary clergy had just undertaken and placed under the charge of Father Perry.

And then suddenly the little Mission had to endure a most unforeseen strain. The Sister-in-charge, Sister Helen, heard that a committee of ladies in New York City was attempting to found a Training School for Nurses, the first in the United States. To Sister Helen, with her background of nursing,



this was irresistibly appealing. She went to New York and called on one of the leaders of the Training School Board, Mrs. William Osborn.

THIS proposed work was the outgrowth of more than a year of investigation and consultation regarding conditions at Bellevue Hospital. A general ferment of concern for improving the conditions in public institutions in New York had led to the formation of a committee especially to visit Bellevue Hospital. To quote from the Fiftieth-Anniversary book of the Bellevue Training School for Nurses, "On January 27, 1872, Mrs. William H. Osborn, Mrs. Hobson, Mrs. Woodworth and one or two others made their first visit, and for many months afterward, day after day they went through the wards and consulted with the authorities and doctors as to how to better the conditions in the Hospital, and the care given to the sick and suffering poor. . . . At the first meeting, held in March, the reports showed that 'Bellevue was a hospital where patients were neither nursed, fed nor clothed as humanity demanded.' . . . At the second meeting, emphasis was laid on the deficiency in the nursing department. The only nursing provided was done by illiterate women at a very low wage, assisted by prisoners from Blackwell's Island and by convalescent patients who were glad to find a home in the hospital." The committee finally proposed a Training School for Nurses "according to the plans that had been instituted by that great woman Florence Nightingale in St. Thomas's Hospital in London." They succeeded in interesting some of the medical staff, notably Dr. W. Gill Wylie, House Surgeon, who made a trip to England to study the Nightingale method at first hand. After he returned, a public appeal was launched which caught general enthusiasm, and funds were speedily collected; consent was won from the Commissioner of Charities to assign six connecting wards on the top floor of the Hospital to the proposed Training School; six pupils were secured; and May 1, 1873, was set for the opening of the school.

One thing was lacking. A Superintendent was still to be found. "One of the members of the Board, in a despondent mood at this time, expressed her anxiety to Mrs. Osborn and received the following reply: 'I have such faith in this work, and I have prayed so for it, that I shall have that Superintendent's bed made, being sure she will come to occupy it.' A few days later Mrs. Osborn was at her breakfast table, when a woman in the garb of a Sister was announced. Her English accent betrayed her nationality."

Whatever Sister Helen's intention may have been when she made that visit, she found herself greeted as an answer to prayer; and it seems that in the eyes of the committee she committed herself to serve. The minutes of the meeting of April 2, however, are restrained, indeed cautious. "Mrs. Hobson told the story of Sister Helen, an English lady belonging to a Sisterhood, who is now in this country and who would probably, if we so wished, be willing to put her services at our disposal. Sister Helen has many years' experience in training nurses—has started several Training Schools—and seems in every way a practical and intelligent woman. It was decided Mrs. Hobson should write to her to meet the ladies of the Committee on Saturday, when she could tell her own story and state in full her qualifications."

The ladies of the committee had no experience of the idea of religious obedience. Sister Helen found herself faced with a pressing deadline, while her Mother Superior was in another country and letters took weeks to come

and go. She wrote to the Mother Foundress, stating the case and begging permission to enter on the work. Father Richey, Rector of Mount Calvary Church, also wrote, expressing his sense of betrayal, pleading against the diminution of the tiny Mission from which he hoped such great things. (It is reported that both Sister Helen and Father Richey had the quick temper that often accompanies generosity and enthusiasm.) It seems clear that no reply had been received from the Mother Foundress when Sister Helen, on April 18, committed herself to serve as Superintendent of the Training School. She never returned to Baltimore. The minutes of a committee meeting of April 23 say, "The difficulties" (of getting the house ready for the nursing students) "were many and manifold, but by the help of Sister Helen and Mrs. Husband we succeeded in subduing most of them and in preventing discouragement amongst our nurses."

This first Training School for Nurses in the United States opened according to plan on May 1, 1873, with six pupils. As it proved itself, little by little the nursing service extended to other wards, until every ward was taken over. When Bellevue Training School was well established, a second such school was opened on Blackwell's Island, and Sister Helen became its first Superintendent.

Though the committee minutes state that she was asked to "modify her religious garb" and did so, a photograph shows Sister Helen as Superintendent wearing the wimple and white cornet then worn by the All Saints Sisters. And we are told that during all the time she was in New York she led an austere and disciplined life, seeking no relaxations and making no secular friendships. When she considered that the work was well established, in 1876 she went back to London, to the Mother House in Margaret Street. Thence she was soon sent out to Cape Town, South Africa, to head the nursing at Somerset Hospital. This tour of duty ended only after the Boer War had broken out and she and her nurses had seen three months' duty with the British forces. After her return from South Africa to England, her life sank back into the regularity of the community. She died, after two years of invalidism, on January 16, 1896.

AND what of the Mission Home in Baltimore?

Sister Serena and Sister Winifred carried on. Sister Serena became temporary Sister-in-charge. They found their hands full. Not only was there all the parish work of Mount Calvary, but burgeoning new work centering around the congregation of St. Mary the Virgin. This was a congregation of blacks, in those days known as "colored people;" and the chief source of information about the work in the 1870's is the Reverend Calbraith Perry's book, *Twelve Years Among the Colored People*, published in 1884. The congregation had been formed five years earlier as St. Philip's Mission and had struggled to survive under various leaderships, of which the most constant and healthy was that of their own lay readers, notably James Thompson and Cassius Mason, both of whom were later ordained to the priesthood in the diocese of Missouri. Early in 1872, the building in which they met was sold to the city, and they could find no other suitable meeting-place in the neighborhood. They decided to send a committee "to wait upon the Rectors of the churches who had heretofore assisted us, to see if any of them would



take us in charge. The committee, at a following meeting, reported that . . . the Rector of Mount Calvary (Rev. Joseph Richey) said if a hall could not be obtained, he would make provision in his church, even to the extent of a special service should we desire it; though all the pews were free to all who chose to come, at any and every service." This account was written by the lay reader, Mr. Mason.

The congregation chose to maintain their identity, on the ground that thus they would have a greater share in the parochial life and work. The Bishop's approval was asked and readily given; but at his request the name was changed from St. Philip's to St. Mary the Virgin. The Reverend Calbraith Perry was assigned by Father Richey to take charge. Father Perry writes, "A few colored women who had long been communicants of Mount Calvary Church and some others gathered from the neighborhood were assembled for the first service on Sunday morning, March 23, 1873, in the chapel of the All Saints Mission House, No. 85 Preston Street. . . . On Sunday, May 11, 1873, the Missionary congregation of St. Philip's was dissolved. On Sunday, May 18, the people who composed it identified themselves with Mount Calvary Chapel of St. Mary the Virgin." During March and April the services had been held in the Sisters' Chapel. The service on May 18 was the first that was held in a small hall on Pennsylvania Avenue, near Orchard Street. "The extemporized chancel was very pretty. The altar was large and effective, its three retables brilliant with lights and flowers. Behind and at the sides were hangings of white and blue. A surpliced choir had been trained by Mrs. Mason, and the singing was such as many a church might have emulated."

Father Oliver Perry Vinton, who was later connected with the work, wrote in 1879 that "a hall was procured in Pennsylvania Avenue and prepared for service. Sister Serena was seen carrying a bucket full of hot water through the streets to scrub the floor, which so inspired some of the now prominent women that, as one of them told us, 'We felt that God was with us, if anyone could do that—and, sir, we scrubbed all the harder because a lady could work so.' "

The Sisters, Father Perry says, took a lively interest in the work, and soon one of them was assigned to work at the Mission House opened for the colored people on Biddle Street. Miss Oliver, the wealthy niece of the Sisters' first hostess in Baltimore, bought a small chapel, originally built by the Swedenborgians, and gave it for the use of the congregation. It stood very close to Mount Calvary Church. Sunday, St. Matthew's Day, 1873, saw the first services there. A school was opened in the basement, with 29 boys and 30 girls; Sister Serena supervised the girls, while Father Perry and his then assistant, Father Leeson, alternately took the boys. In 1879, the number under instruction in day and night sessions had grown to 350.

About this time, Sister Harriet was sent out from England to be the Sister Superior; and in April 1874 two more, Sister Anna Maria and Sister Jane, came to help. This increased the number to only four, as Sister Winifred was sent home because of illness. However, the next year Sister Mary Elizabeth came to join them and to spend the remaining 35 years of her life in this country.

To England with Sister Winifred went the first American Postulant, who

was clothed in May 1874 and professed two years later as Sister Mary Bridget. She returned to America in 1878.

Because of the poor postal communications which continued to exist, the date of Sister Harriet's expected arrival was not known in Baltimore. One evening the Sisters heard footsteps approaching the house and one of them said, "That is Sister Harriet's footstep," and Sister Harriet it was! Because of her prayerfulness, Sister Harriet was called, "the Sister who always looked up."

In 1874 the Sisters moved to a larger house on Madison Avenue, where it was possible to begin the long-desired School for Young Ladies, a boarding school intended for the daughters of Southerners impoverished by the war. But it never had a fair chance, for the parents could not pay even the very modest fees asked. The next year, when the Sisters moved to 847 North Eutaw Street, the School for Young Ladies was moved into a separate house adjoining; and there, by dint of taking day scholars, it eked out a precarious existence until 1888.

There was also a parish school in connection with Mount Calvary Church until 1890. And the St. Mary's schools thrived. Like his Rector, Father Richey, Father Perry earnestly desired to extend the work by setting up boarding schools; and for a few years there were academies for boys and for girls (with which the Sisters were apparently not connected) but, like the School for Young Ladies, neither one endured for long. Each, however, when it dissolved, left a lower department of day scholars which continued. The Sisters carried on the work with these little ones.

March 12, 1876, was another foundation day: the date of the first death among the Sisters. It was Sister Harriet, the second Sister Superior, who was the first in the United States to enter into rest. Sister Harriet had been a Postulant when the Mother Foundress was installed in London 20 years earlier, and she had been one of the contingent that went to Paris during the Franco-Prussian war. In her less than three years in America she had gained the respect and love of many. Father Perry speaks of her rare wisdom and great devotion and says that she was noted as one whose sympathy and counsel were sought by every class. "At the funeral services in Mount Calvary Church, twenty vested clergy in the choir showed their respect and their appreciation of her work, and the eighteen Sisters present represented several Religious Orders." Her body was buried in St. John's churchyard, Waverly.

Eighteen months later, on St. Matthew's Day 1877, Father Joseph Richey, the Rector of Mount Calvary Church, who had called the All Saints Sisters to Baltimore, died in London, England. He had been sent by his congregation on a European tour in a fruitless attempt to restore his failing health. Among his last visitors, the evening before his death, were Father Benson, S.S.J.E., and the Mother Foundress of All Saints. His body, too, lies in St. John's churchyard close by those of the early Sisters.

By this time the little All Saints Mission House had established itself securely enough to bow to these shocks and straighten sturdily again. Indeed, Father Richey's successor as Rector of Mount Calvary Church, Father Robert Hitchcock Paine, became a good friend and most generous benefactor of the Sisters.



After Sister Harriet died, Sister Jane assumed the responsibility of acting as Sister Superior until, in the fall, the Mother Superior sent out Sister Frances Helen to take charge. With her came young Sister Petronilla, just professed, whose artistic ability established her as one of the most valuable Sisters in the community's embroidery room. December 1877 brought Sister Emily and Sister Mary Raphael, and the next year brought Sister Sophia Elizabeth and Sister Mary Clement. (Sister Mary Clement, after two years' service as teacher in St. Mary's day school, died in 1881 of an unnamed "lingering illness" and added her grave to the others in St. John's churchyard.) Sister Mary Ursula was sent at the close of 1879, so that the decade ended with a corps of ten Choir Sisters and one Lay Sister under Sister Frances Helen's direction.

ONE of the longest-lived of the Sisters' institutions was established about this time. We do not know the exact date of the foundation of St. Mary's Home for Little Colored Boys, but it must have been not later than 1880, possibly earlier. The record in England describing the beginnings of the work at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin notes that "there was at this time a great need for a Home for destitute colored boys. One of the clergy at Mount Calvary Church found a house suitable for this purpose; but the rent was forty dollars a month, and it was a constant struggle all the time to raise it." Father Perry says in his book that the Home was undertaken at the request of the colored people themselves, that "there was no shelter or orphanage for colored boys of any description in the State of Maryland except a reformatory institution. It is an excellent institution for its purpose, established and superintended by charitable and influential citizens because before its establishment there was no place to send juvenile colored offenders except the city jail. But a reform school is no place for innocent children."

The first house used by St. Mary's Home was given up because the landlady refused to make necessary repairs, and the Sisters and boys took refuge for a few months in a disused music hall. Then another house was secured at 409 Biddle Street; later on, the adjoining house was added. Father Perry gives a word-picture of the Home as it existed in 1884:

"On the south side of Biddle Street, just beyond the Richmond market, stands a plain three-story brick house only to be distinguished from its neighbors by a small gilded cross over the door. On the doorplate may be read the words 'S. Mary's Home.' Ring the bell; a Sister will probably open the door. Her habit, her distinctive dress, may be recognized as that of the All Saints' Sisters of the Poor. Two of these Sisters reside at the house. One of the two is the Sister in charge of the work carried on among the colored people. On entering, you may encounter another Sister, whose dark face, beneath the neat white cap, may be a surprise, and whose habit of dark blue may suggest the name of her Order. This is a Sister of S. Mary's and All Saints. . . . But only the threshold of the Home has been reached. On entering, to the left hand is a neat though plain reception room. As one rests a moment before going over the house, there may be heard merry laughter and noisy shouts through the closed folding-doors. It is quite possible there may be sounds quite the reverse of laughter, and some not altogether amiable words from childish lips, for we are not about to introduce to the reader cherubs or the 'good boys' of Sunday-school books. But there they are, tumbling about in comfortable yet controlled freedom, a dozen or more little fellows, most of



them with curly heads and black faces, in which glisten bright eyes and white teeth—the younger boys of the Orphanage. Through another open door, if it happens not to be during school hours, will be seen in the long yard, which extends back to Howard Street, a dozen or so of the older boys playing with their tops or with ball and bat. Here are sheltered a score of little colored boys from four to twelve years old, otherwise homeless or rescued from houses of wretchedness, clothed, fed, educated in the parish day-school, and, best of all, lovingly taught to grow up as Christian men, and therefore useful citizens. How is this institution supported? is often asked. Invariably the reply has to be made, 'We do not know, except that God provides for it.' It is a marvel to ourselves that the end of each year finds the home without debt. . . . This house is rented for five hundred dollars a year. The rent is partly met by the income of the day school, the weekly ten-cent payments from each pupil; the Sisters teach in the school without other remuneration. For the rest of the rent, just as the prospect darkens, and the time that it is due draws near, some kind friend, most often unsolicited, sends five or ten dollars to the Sisters' relief. To our shame, in this country, be it said, it is quite as often a pound from friends in England as five dollars from those near home.

"Every day a Sister goes out with a basket over her arm, through the markets, and into shops, and receives what the dealers choose to give her. . . . The basket never goes home empty. With a cheery smile, one after another throws in a chop or bit of steak, two or three potatoes, or a handful of fruit. . . . Here comes Sister from market, with well-laden basket on arm, great mingling of scraps of meat and various odd things on top, red, green and gray, all which will be duly sorted, and make dishes not unsavory. Behind her, two of the larger boys drag, like a goodly pair of prancing ponies, a little wagon—a toy with many children, but here serving the sensible purpose of carrying for the Sisters the overplus."

A memoir written in England years later supports Father Perry's description of the providential care of St. Mary's Home. Sister Mary Ursula, who later became Mother General in England, when she was talking about shortage of funds at an English work, remarked to the writer of the memoir, "'I have never felt the least anxious over that since I was in America.' Her work [in America] was among the colored people, and she was in charge of the orphanage. It was in the height of summer when all their friends were away in the country and no remittance was due from England. She had got to find forty dollars for the rent within a few days, but had only twenty-two dollars and there was no-one at the time from whom she could borrow—because of the holiday time. She was praying in chapel one evening, and was called out to see two colored women; they were quite unknown to her and said, 'We have heard of all you have done for the colored people and are so grateful that we have brought you a present.' It was eighteen dollars! Almost before she could thank them, they were gone and she never saw nor heard of them again. (Were they angels in disguise?) On another occasion they were again without funds for the rent and she knew the landlady would not wait and they would have to turn out, but had no idea where to go. They were all packed up expecting the worst, when a lady they knew, came and asked if they would care to go to her cottage out in the country which she was not

wanting at the time. So they had a roof over their heads. I do not know the sequel."

Father Perry's description of St. Mary's Home introduced the Sisterhood of St. Mary's and All Saints. While this was not founded by the Society of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, it was intimately connected with All Saints throughout its brief but fruitful life. It was founded by Father Calbraith B. Perry: it was indeed "the darling wish" of *his* heart. He saw a Roman Catholic Sisterhood of black women thriving, sending out branches, and doing wonderful social work among their people, and he dreamed of the same great service for his own parishioners and their fellows. Before Sister Harriet's death, he had asked her help in drawing up a Rule, before any aspirant was on the horizon; and he set himself to search for candidates. The first came in 1874, elderly, illiterate, but with a true vocation. With the help of Sister Harriet, Father Perry planned her course of instruction, and Sister Eliza fulfilled her five-year Novitiate under the supervision of the All Saints Sisters. The long Novitiate, and the provision that vows were to be taken only for one year at a time, were intended to meet the expected difficulties of the foundation, among people unused to the idea of the Religious Life. No attempt was made to give the Sisters of St. Mary's and All Saints a separate house; Sister Eliza and other Postulants lived and worked at St. Mary's Home. Aspirants came in very slowly, usually without education or capacity. After 10 years there were two professed Sisters, with one Novice and one Postulant.

Only five were ever professed, and the first three had died before 1896. Yet in that year the prospects of the community must have looked hopeful, for the opening of a mission chapel of St. Mary's Church led, through various unplanned providential movements, to the settling of the two remaining Sisters in their own house, to manage St. Katharine's Home for Colored Girls, at 2000 Druid Hill Avenue. The two Sisters were younger and better educated than the first group. Sister Leila Mary was Sister-in-charge, an intelligent woman and a good organizer, and popular with her people. But she chafed at any kind of control, and when in 1911 the Reverend Mother of All Saints (still supervisor of the work) named Sister Babetta Frances as Sister-in-charge, Sister Leila Mary soon left the house, taking the one Novice with her.

Sister Babetta Frances remained six years longer. She was an attractive and lovable Sister, and managed her house well; but she felt her loneliness and lack of community life keenly. In 1917, with the full sympathy of the All Saints Sisters, she asked for admittance to the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine in Toronto, Canada. With her departure the Sisterhood of St. Mary's and All Saints came to an end. St. Katharine's Home became its legacy to the All Saints Sisters.

THE 1880's were a decade of expansion. The impulse to the Religious Life seems to have been felt throughout the Church, and all the Anglican communities increased in numbers. In Baltimore so many Postulants were coming in that the question arose whether it would be possible for them to make their whole Novitiate in America. It was decided that this could be done by Lay Postulants; but Choir Postulants, after being received and tested, must go to England for their Novitiate.



During the decade, as many as 14 Postulants went from America to try their vocations in England. Four Lay Sisters were professed in Baltimore. And seven more Sisters came from England at various times. Five of them stayed only a few years; but Sister Georgina and Sister Teresa cast in their lot with the American community, as we shall see.

With growth in numbers came growth in works, sometimes on a very experimental basis. The first work outside Baltimore was undertaken at Philadelphia, as a natural consequence of the coming of the Cowley Fathers to St. Clement's Church in Philadelphia. This extension by the Cowley Fathers was a great blessing to the All Saints Sisters; stationed in Philadelphia, their spiritual advisers were within a much more reachable distance than in Boston. The link was strengthened when in January 1880 Sister Emily went to Philadelphia to start parish work at St. Clement's. Two more Sisters soon followed her, beginning a work which under changing forms has continued ever since.

In 1885 Father Moffett, who had been a Curate at Mount Calvary, was called to be Rector of Holy Innocents' Church, Hoboken, New Jersey. He at once asked if some Sisters might work in his parish and school, as they did until 1898. In 1886, two Sisters were sent to a small mission work in Washington, D.C., but after a few months they were withdrawn. Almost ten years later, work was undertaken at All Saints Church, Orange Valley, New Jersey, and continued for five years.

Meanwhile in Baltimore parish work was begun in the old parish of St. Andrew's. The All Saints Home for Children came into existence. And it was at this time that an embroidery room was opened, in which very beautiful work was done for many years, as some surviving vestments silently testify.

"MOTHER RESTS."

That was the cablegram sent from London on August 3, 1887. It was not unexpected. Letters had reported the Mother Foundress' painful illness, and the Sisters' alternating fears and hopes, throughout the spring and summer. But though there had been warning and preparation, it came as the end of an era. The next day, August 4th, was the 31st anniversary of the day on which Bishop Wilberforce had installed her as Reverend Mother Superior. Now her work on earth was ended, work that had been blessed and had widened beyond any dreams. "Asia, Africa and America have experience of it," the All Saints Parish Magazine said in her obituary, "and can tell how God has blessed the consecrated work of those who seek first His glory, in the work that is not hindered but advanced by being made subsidiary to the Life."

It is only conjecture to see a connection between the Mother Foundress' death and the establishment of the American branch of the Society of the All Saints Sisters of the Poor as an autonomous congregation. But we know that as the duties of planning, supervision and decision fell on new shoulders, there was a review of the whole work of the Society and that some needed pruning was done. The case for making the American branch autonomous was strong, in the growth of the community and its general circumstances, and in its distance in time and space (so much longer and farther then than now!) from the English Mother House and Novitiate. Moreover it appears

that the custom always was to return American Novices to the Baltimore house after Profession.

The letters that might have told the history of the move toward autonomy have been lost. We know only that the change was formally completed after the autumn Chapter of 1890. At least five of the English Sisters (Sister Frances Helen, Sister Jane, Sister Mary Elizabeth, Sister Teresa and Sister Georgina) chose to stay as permanent members of the new congregation. The former Sister Superior, Sister Frances Helen, became the first Mother Superior.

The Right Reverend William Paret, Bishop of Maryland since 1885, accepted the office of Visitor and officiated at the installation of the Reverend Mother Frances Helen on December 4, 1890. The Reverend Mother Caroline Mary, successor to the Mother Foundress, came to America for the occasion.

Bishop Paret's relations with the Society were always cordial, and his address at the installation shows how fully and sympathetically he understood the bases of the Sisters' life.

"I think it will not be out of place this morning, if I address myself chiefly to the Mother Superior, who has come across the ocean to us, and to the Mother who has just been placed in the seat of authority; but I hope my words may prove helpful to all.

"First I wish to express to you my heartfelt gratitude for the step which has been consummated this morning, in placing this Society in a more independent position in this country and national church. I also wish to say for my own part, that I gratefully and lovingly accept the position which has been offered to me, and I wish to give you the assurance of my interest and prayers in your behalf, both as regards your temporal well-being and also in the far higher spiritual well-being of your community; and I trust that my association with you and your work may be helpful to us all. I do not know in what your work consists except in a general way, I do not know your aim and Rule of Life except in a general way; but I hope as time goes on and we are associated together to learn more particularly of both.

"I understand that in all your works of mercy, whether in tending the poor and sick and in some measure relieving their temporal wants or in assisting the spiritually poor and destitute in spiritual things, you act in such a way, that these works may serve to your growth in personal holiness, that your work is subordinate to your growth in the spiritual life: and this not in any selfish way, for no gift in the spiritual life is given us for our own exclusive sanctification, or even chiefly for that, but that it may make us fruitful in good works for others, to the glory of God.

"Will you let me speak to you especially today of one grace, virtue or gift of the Christian life—not perhaps the highest, but certainly one of very great importance and one which took a prominent part in the service just rendered. I mean the grace of humility—that is a lowly estimation of ourselves. It is perfectly consistent with a consciousness of the very greatest integrity, that is purity—not faultlessness, but purity so that St. Paul could say without detriment to his humility, 'I have walked before God in all good conscience till this day'. So that he could speak boastfully, or what he called boastfully, meaning not sinfully so, of the dignity of his high calling as an apostle and of the work which he had by the grace of God been enabled to do. In the



same way we see the example in our blessed Lord of perfect lowliness and humility which did not interfere with his dignified persistent unflinching claim to absolute personal purity, and to honor and reverence as the Son of God. Again we see the same in Moses, who while the meekest of men as the Bible expresses it—there it is called meekness—yet found grace in his office to rule firmly and faithfully the great multitude committed to his care.

“Now there is a sort of humility, which may be regarded as a sort of imitation of the true grace, which leads us to act toward others as if we were on a lower level than our conscience before God honestly tells us that we are. I do not know whether I have made it clear to you. This mock humility, as I may call it, leads us to speak of ourselves as more unworthy than we are, more sinful than we honestly believe ourselves to be, more incapable.

“It is not humility to choose the lowest place because it is the lowest; but because I can do more for God there than anywhere else, because it is the place God means me to fill. Humility does not consist in lowering the authority of the position to which, by the providence of God, you have been called. The highest estimation of the dignity of one’s office may be consistent with the greatest personal lowliness. Like St. Paul, I may say I do not wish to speak boastfully. There have been times, since the burden of my office was laid upon me, when I have been enabled by the grace of God so far to forget myself, to sink my personality in my office, to forget myself in the consciousness of the exercise of the authority of my office. I may say that whenever by the grace of God I have been enabled thus to forget myself, I have acted more firmly, more boldly, without regard to what others might think of my conduct, content with the consciousness of being faithful to One above.

“And so to you, my daughter, who have just been placed in the seat of authority as Mother of this house, to you will come the temptation to let things pass, not to reprove when necessary, to be gentle and yielding when you ought to be firm and strong. Then when the temptation comes it is the grace of humility that will help you not to yield. Be lowly in your own person, remembering you are responsible to God and those whom he sets over you; but be strong in what is right to do, even if you should be judged harsh and severe because of it. You must bear the sense of being misjudged, being thought stringent, proud, overexact in authority. Speaking of my own experience of the last six years, I can tell you temptations will come. Every day there will be trials, every day there will be failures to humiliate you. But be strong.

“I pray God for you, my daughter, that you may seek God’s help in private prayer as also in united prayer and public worship; and above all in that dear approach to our blessed Lord which He permits us to make to His holy altar. And for those who are placed under you I pray that they may have the grace to obey cheerfully, willingly, lovingly.”

At the time of her installation Mother Frances Helen was already in poor health, a victim of cancer. She had undergone surgery more than once, and had lost the use of her right arm. But she was a courageous soul and made light of her troubles. She became skillful in using her left hand, and could even sew if someone would thread her needle. She played the organ using her left hand and her feet. Full of gaiety, she was fond of telling amusing

stories. No one who met her casually could realize how seriously she was handicapped.

AS SOON as autonomy was established, the Choir Novitiate opened. An aspirant had been working with the Sisters, only waiting for the new regime to apply for admission. Nine months later another Novice joined her. This was Sister Mary Rachel, who had made her Novitiate in England and had even been elected for Profession when, in April 1890, one of her brothers died. He had been a widower, and he left seven children to the care of another brother, an unmarried man, who begged his sister to come help him out for a time. The duty seemed clear, and Sister Mary Rachel went in her Novice's habit, thinking it would be only a short time. When it lengthened out into a year and more, the Chaplain General, Father Benson, S.S.J.E., said that some decision must be made: either she must return to the Novitiate or give up her habit. She chose to return to the Baltimore Novitiate and was professed in February 1892. In the first six years after autonomy was established, seven Choir and nine Lay Postulants entered the Novitiate, but only four Choir and two Lay Sisters were professed, including those mentioned.

In 1890, the community moved into its first home that was designed and built as a Convent, at 801 North Eutaw Street. This building was made possible by the generosity of the Reverend Robert Hitchcock Paine, Rector of Mount Calvary Church and Chaplain to the Sisters.

A back section of the house was designed for the use of the All Saints Home for Children. This was a little orphanage which had begun spontaneously to provide care for two or three white girls who were in special need, and which had become an established work. When the Sisters moved into their new Convent, the back section was still unfinished. Until it was completed, the Rector of St. Paul's Church lent the use of a house at 2411 North Charles Street, which had been bought for St. Paul's Orphanage but was not yet remodeled. The All Saints children, 14 of them at that time, lived there for eight months, cared for by Sister Georgina, Sister Loretta, and the girl who later became Sister Emma but was not then old enough to be received as a Postulant. It was a most inconvenient arrangement, for the old house stood then quite in the suburbs and the Sisters had to walk all the way to St. John's, Waverly, for their daily Mass. Only on Sundays and festivals could they go to the much nearer St. Michael's. The suburban situation did not help their begging, either, and at that time all the food the children had was begged.

When in June 1891 they moved into their quarters behind the Convent, ready at last, new difficulties were soon discovered. The Home faced directly on the Maryland General Hospital; and the sights and sounds coming through the open windows were often distressing, the comings and goings of the medical students often distracting. In a short time it was decided to move the children again, to a house on Carey Street. Here they were settled for several years.

Thus under Mother Frances Helen's guidance St. Mary's Home for Little Colored Boys, St. Katharine's Home for Colored Girls, and the All Saints Home for Children (later re-named St. Barbara's) were all established, to



serve Baltimore's children for half a century. Many of these children grew up with English accents added to their own particular lingo.

On July 21, 1897, Mother Frances Helen died. Father Paine wrote in an obituary, "Within four weeks of her death she had visited branch houses of her community in Orange, Hoboken and Philadelphia, counselling her Sisters and entering into their plans and the details of their work. The end of her sufferings came after a short time of special distress and weakness, with few outside of her own Sisterhood knowing that it was near. A warning of an hour or two, just at the last, was the opportunity for the reception of the Holy Communion as her food for the journey. . . . Under her firm but gentle guidance the Sisterhood has slowly grown. Many religious of other communities will rise up with her own spiritual children, and call her blessed, for the wise and loving counsel which helped them to find the Will of God, calling them to the Rule under which they thankfully follow their vocation." Her body was buried in St. John's churchyard, Waverly, beside the graves of Sister Harriet, Sister Mary Clement, and Sister Jane, who had died in 1892.

Sister Adelaide Frances was elected to succeed her, the first American-born Mother Superior. She had served as Novice Mistress until 1896, and had spent the year since in charge of the work among the colored people. She was to be re-elected continuously until 1927. Mother Adelaide had, of course, made her Novitiate in England, in the first Mother House in Margaret Street, London. In 1902 she revisited England, to attend the consecration of the new Mother House of the English congregation, at London Colney, about three miles from St. Alban's.

One more Sister was to come to the American congregation from England. A Sister still living recalls one day in 1904 when she, either a Postulant or a newly-clothed Novice, was standing in line to enter the refectory, and she was astonished to see one more Sister's veil in the line than should be there. No one had told the Novitiate that there was to be a visitor! The professed Sisters did not have much advance notice.

Sister Elspeth, the newcomer, was professed in England in 1896. In 1904 she was physically run-down and just recovering from the shock of the death of her closest relative, a brother who had gone to India as a missionary and died there at the age of 32. The Reverend Mother wanted to change her work. The unexpected visit of some St. Margaret's Sisters from Boston gave an opportunity to do so very thoroughly. They were leaving for America in a few days, and there was an empty berth in the stateroom booked for their return passage. Sister Elspeth occupied it, sent by the Mother to visit the American Convent in Baltimore. Sister Elspeth later said that the real poverty and joy she found among the Baltimore Sisters at once appealed to her. She applied for election to the American congregation, and the notice of election which she received from the Chaplain (still Father Paine, Rector of Mount Calvary Church) dated May 12, 1906, is preserved. "May it always be a blessing to you," he wrote, "and be blessed by you. . . . Our Lord who calls has always blessings for those who follow, and all here in America may share with you the love and life that will come to you from Him, as you are drawn closer and closer to Him." But at that time no one guessed for how long Sister Elspeth was to bless and be blessed by her Sisters in America. Working in the Homes, leading retreats and Quiet Days, caring for chickens, serving

for years as Novice Mistress, she lived to become the first centenarian in the community, dying on January 3, 1970, in the 74th year of her Profession.

While still in England, Sister Elspeth wrote several of the Victoria County Histories. In her 88th year, making tapes for a Junior High Church School teacher, she compiled the material for the Seabury Student Resource Book for grade nine, *The Old Testament Roots of Our Faith*, which proves that in the spiritual life, at least, generation gaps can be transcended. Sister Elspeth also contributed to the Forward Movement publications, including the widely used *Proving Prayer* pamphlet.

Not only her brother, but also her mother and father each died at the age of 32. This fact, taken with her own completed course of 101 years, shows that there is not always conformity in the ages of family members when they depart this life.

In 1904, the All Saints Home moved again, from Carey Street to Warwick Avenue, Walbrook. Apparently from this time it was known as St. Barbara's Home. Three years later, St. Mary's Home also moved, into a new house built for it at Gilmor and Presstman Streets. This building was made possible by the sale of a property in Pikesville, which had been given to the community specifically to help with the work among the colored people. Opposition by white neighbors prevented moving the Home to Pikesville, but when the property was sold the proceeds more than paid for the new building. The new St. Mary's Home was blessed in July 1907 and continued to the end as the place of residence. Here hundreds of small boys were nurtured. Many of them were baptized, becoming godsons of the various All Saints Sisters. To this day they know that the Sisters are a family background. Several of the now older men sign themselves, "Your son," when sending a card to the Sister known to them as "Godmother." When they reach the age of 65, as many of them have, and need proofs for Social Security records, they turn to the Convent.

Many stories have grown out of each work, too innumerable to record; but a couple will indicate the atmosphere of the early days at St. Mary's Home.

Those were the days when the Sisters picked up coal from the sides of the railroad tracks and begged the food for the children from the Baltimore markets. One Sister said that she was at her heaviest weight ever when she lived at St. Mary's on cheese, the main food-gift of her year there. A few days before a Thanksgiving Day dinner, the Sister-in-charge asked the boys what would be their choice for this annual festival. They shouted, "Scrapple!" So scrapple it was to be. The phone rang on the day before Thanksgiving, and a kind benefactress inquired whether Sister had sufficient food for this special dinner. She was assured that all was well supplied. However, the kind friend inquired further as to what was being planned. We can imagine the diffidence in the reply, "Scrapple." The retort came back, "Indeed, you're not!", and the sequel was the arrival at the door of a delivery man from one of the best catering stores in Baltimore, with a huge turkey. We can imagine the pleasure in Sister's eyes then, and again when she began to serve it to the boys—until she saw the dismay in the faces of her small charges and heard them saying tearfully, "But, Sister, you said we were going to have scrapple." This speaks for their faith in the word of their Sister, as well as their genuine preference for what they had selected.



The boys had their chores and responsibilities. They were taught to answer the doorbell and to ask the name of the visitor before admitting anyone. On one occasion, one of them was heard persistently arguing with his old grandmother at the front door, admonishing her to tell her name before he would open the door. "Your name, please," he kept repeating, until a Sister arrived to let her in, in a much irritated frame of mind.

A Sister who was assigned to our Home for Colored Girls tells the story of another seeming miracle:

"We were very poor at St. Katharine's Home. One morning, as I was leaving the house with two of the little girls to do the begging of food at the public market, the Sister-in-charge called me into the Waiting Room and said, 'Sister, while you are out, pray earnestly that Our Lord will provide us with the means to pay our helpers their wages tonight.' I said, 'How much do you need?' She replied—'Seventeen dollars and fifty cents.'

"Entering the trolley I began to pray; and as I stepped off a gentleman, standing on the corner, came to me and said, 'Sister, please pray for my friend, John, who is near death.' With that, he put two one-dollar bills in my hand.

"The first stall-keeper was busy with a customer, but he motioned for me not to pass by. As I stood waiting, an elderly gentleman asked if the children were with me. When I said, 'Yes,' he put a five-dollar bill in my hand, saying, 'It is a good work, use the money any way you think best.'

"Having almost finished, I was on my way outside to an Italian fruit dealer who had the previous week asked me to bring him a pocket-sized St. Anthony, when there came a tug on my cloak and a voice saying, 'Please, Sister, stand right here; my mother wants to give you something.' With that a real grandmother hove into view, opening her pocketbook as she came. 'Sister, here is the ten dollars I promised Our Lord I would give to the children if my granddaughter got well and she did!' Feeling that she thought I was a St. Elizabeth's Sister, I told her so, but she said—'That doesn't matter; you are doing the Lord's work, too.' Just as I was about to step on the trolley to return to the Home, a poor old lady in a thin shabby coat said, 'Wait a minute, Sister, I have something for you.' She took out of the corner of her handkerchief two quarters and pressed them in my hand.

"Our prayers were answered to the penny. From that day to this no one has ever given me money on the street."

THE FIRST decade of this century seems to have been a period of stabilization. Postulants came, slowly but steadily; the works were solidly established; the Sisters now had a generation of tradition behind them. All the smaller works outside Baltimore and the immediate vicinity had been given up, except the house in Philadelphia. In 1913, in Philadelphia, a new work was begun.

St. Anna's Home for Aged Women met, for a few persons, a need which was not new then, but grows and becomes more acute in our changing world: the need for a home giving personal care to older women no longer able to live alone, for whom there is no place in our present family pattern, yet who are neither sick nor senile. The community acquired two houses on Race Street, close to St. Clement's Church, and threw them into one, with

rooms for 19 residents. There must have been busy weeks of carpentry and plastering, of plumbers at work and electricians (one of the items in a published accounting is \$232.10 for installing electric lights) before the Home opened on February 27. The fee asked in the beginning was five dollars a week, which a brochure published a year later quietly points out was not, even in 1914, enough to cover expenses. From the beginning, St. Anna's rejoiced in active and devoted friends, some of whom were formally organized as the Associates of St. Anna's Home. Their generosity met the deficits; their kindness provided entertainments and little luxuries for the boarders. The gifts ranged from a dozen sheets to a barrel of sweet potatoes, from seven tons of coal to a canary bird in a cage.

The Sister-in-charge in 1951 wrote, "The ideal we have till now tried to maintain is that of a religious home—not an institution. Our ladies are not hampered by rules, each has her own room, which may be furnished to her liking with her own things. She may come and go pretty much as she pleases, as her strength allows. We have found that this order of things adds greatly to the confidence of aged people seeking a home for their last years. . . . The Chapel in the house, with the unspeakable blessing of the Reserved Sacrament, freedom to go to it at any time, at least a weekly Mass, Communion, and the Sacraments at the time of death—these are untold blessings made possible for us by the Rector of St. Clement's Parish."

In the 1970's, St. Anna's still provides for its residents the answer to their problem. That it exists, and in the same building, seems to be the direct result of providential care. 2016 Race Street is now embraced on two sides by the Franklin Institute, a pigmy overshadowed by giants. In the early 1950's, the scheme for speeding the city's traffic planned to widen Race Street, cutting 15 feet from properties on the Home's side. This would have been equivalent to guillotining St. Anna's. When the Sisters believed the Home was doomed, official minds changed and the plan was dropped. The latest civic decision is in the opposite direction: the district edging St. Anna's on the other side has been declared an historic site, to be preserved; and if St. Anna's wishes to make any major changes, it will now be necessary to apply for permission!

So the quiet residents of the quiet brick building continue to meet for tea in the sun-parlor, and to help one another up the stairs to Chapel at Vespertime.





*The first Mother Superior in America*  
*Reverend Mother Superior Frances Helen*  
1890 - 1897

*Reverend Mother Adelaide Frances*  
1897 - 1927

*Reverend Mother Catherine Angela*  
1927 - 1932

*Reverend Mother Laura*  
1932 - 1950

*Reverend Mother Jessie*  
1950 - 1951

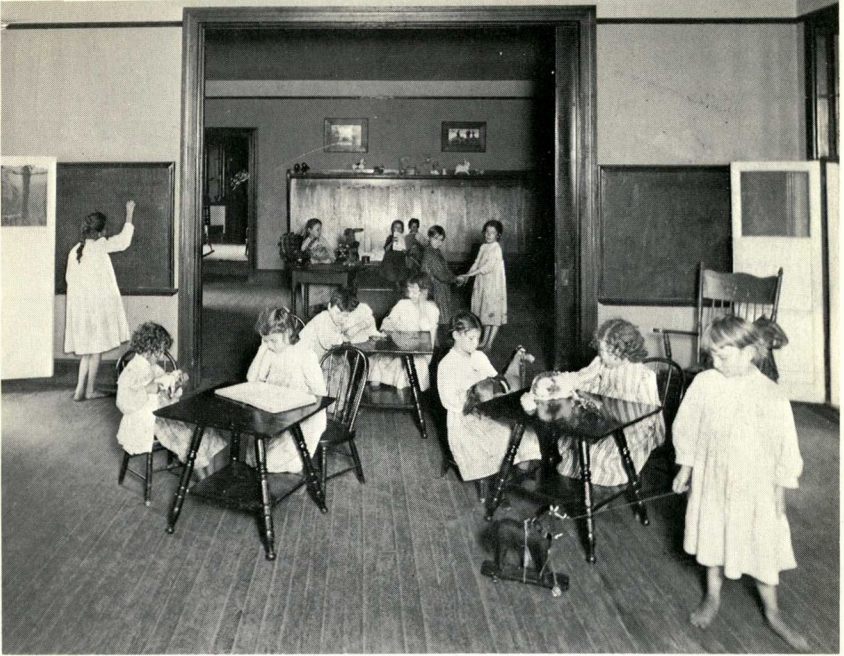
*Reverend Mother Virginia*  
1951 -



*The Community of All Saints, America — 1972*



Former Works . . . . .

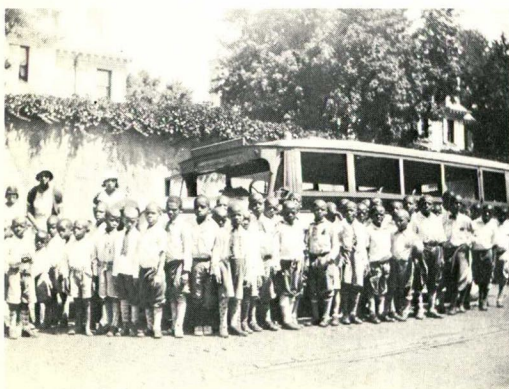
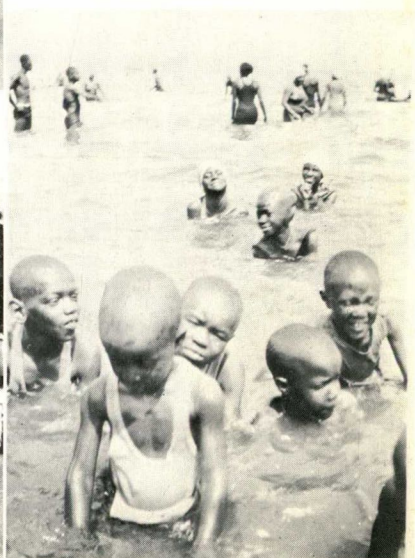
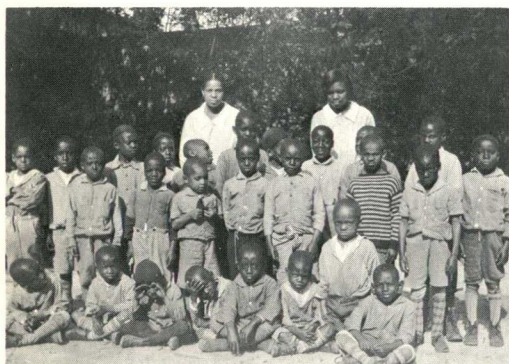


*Country Home for Children*



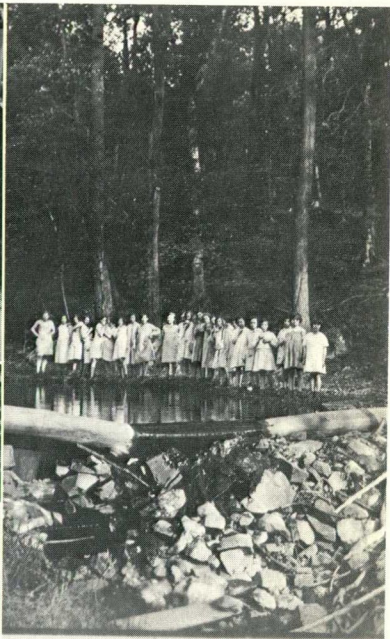
*St. Mary's Home*

*St. Mary's Home*

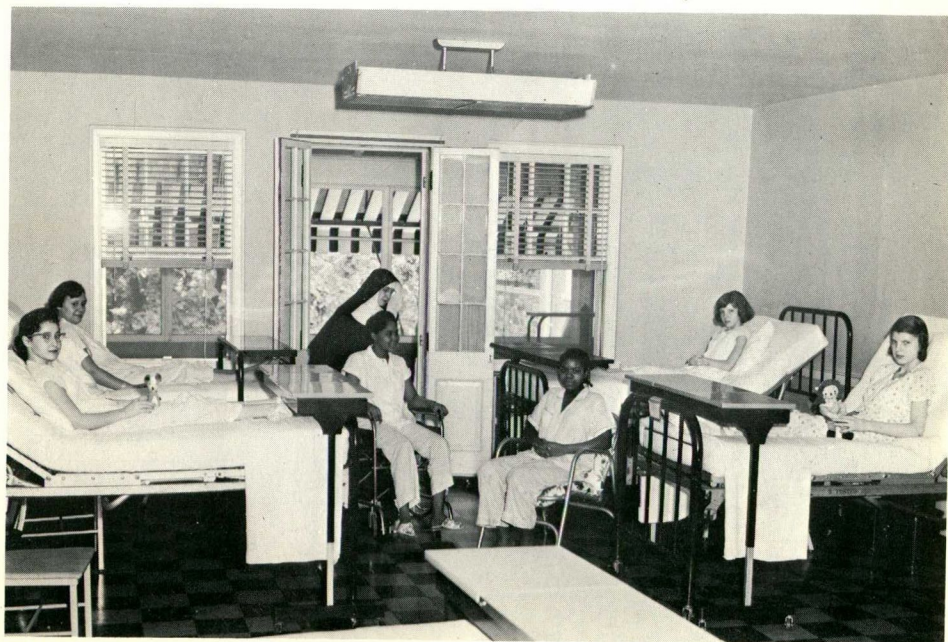




*St. Barbara's Home*



*St. Gabriel's Home — Convalescent phase*

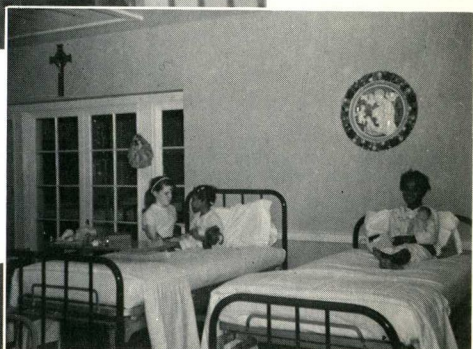
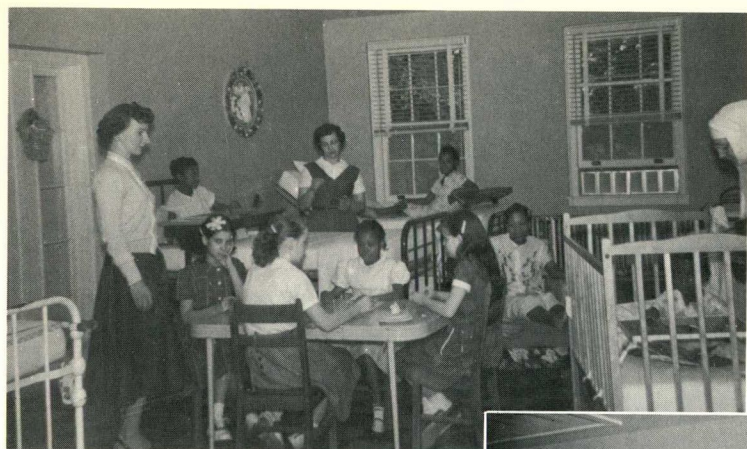




*St. Gabriel's Home*

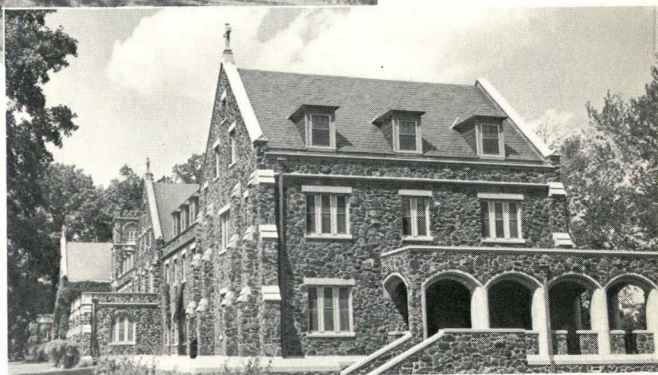
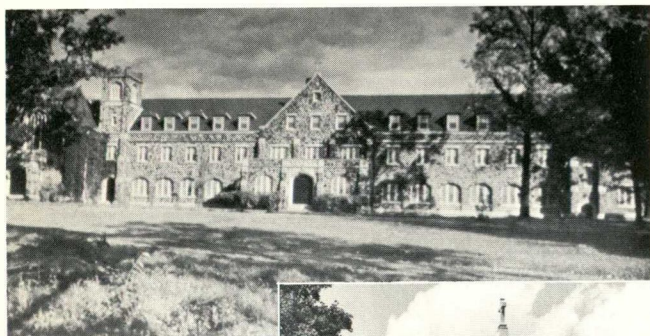






Present Works . . . . .

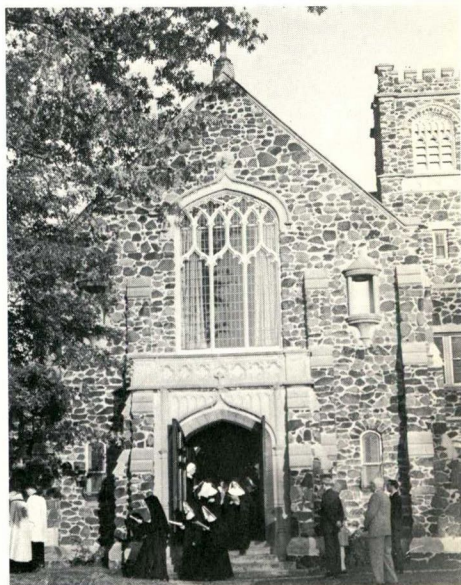
*The Motherhouse*



*South wing added in 1960*



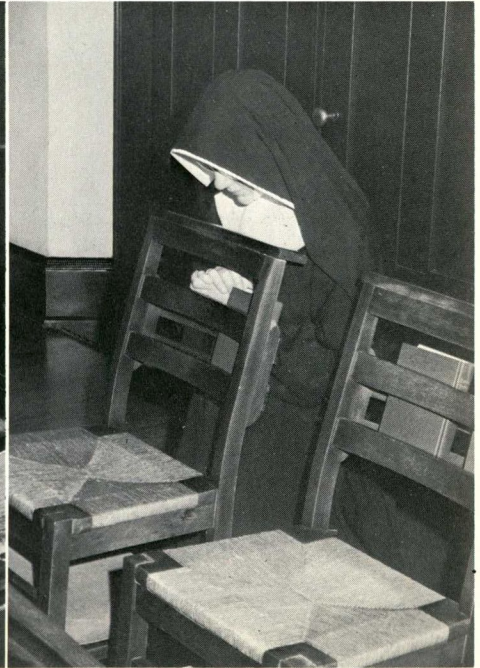
*East wing added in 1967  
to one added in 1938*



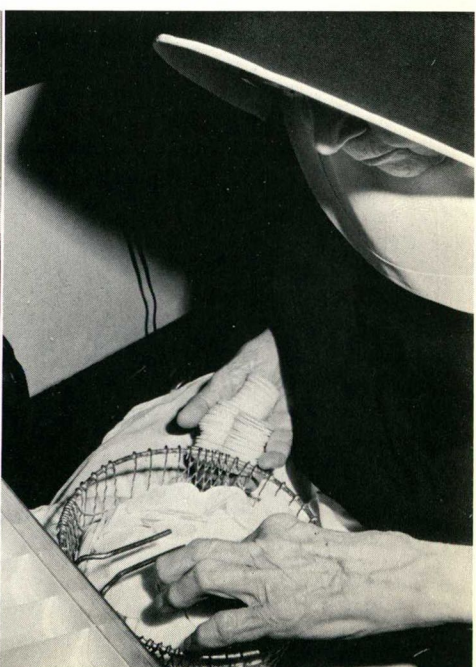
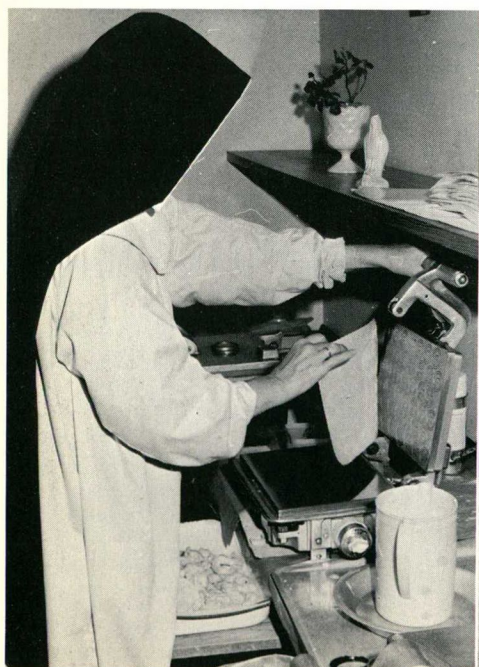
*Chapel  
Cornerstone laid in 1921*



*What we do at the Convent*







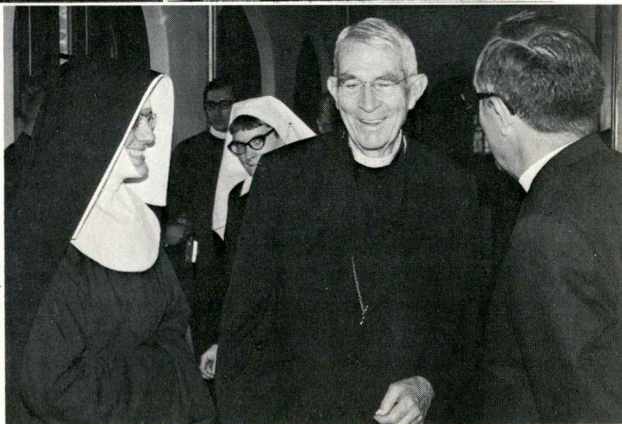




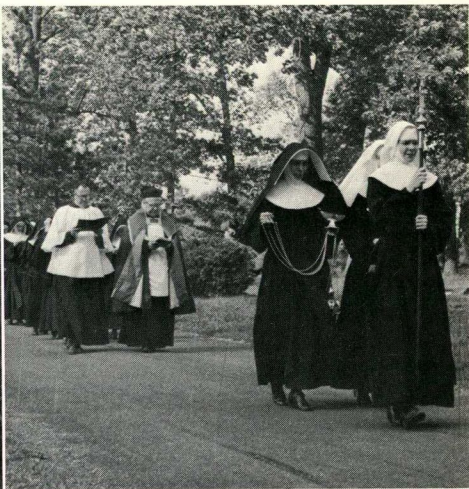




*Functions and Festivals at the Convent . . . .*









*Convent candid . . . . .*









*Convent-based works "in the world" . . . . .*









*St. Anna's Home — Philadelphia . . . . .*

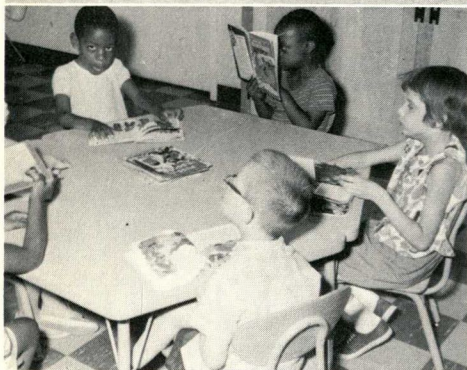




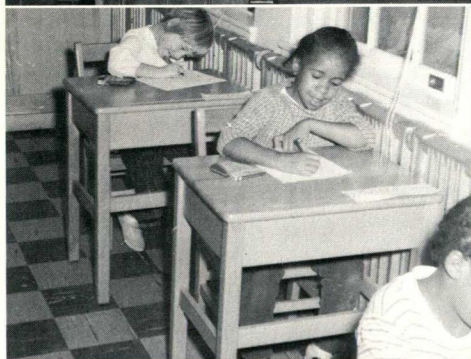




*St. Gabriel's Home . . . . .*









"I HAVE probably never told you," wrote a friend of long standing in 1970, "of my first experience in going to a midnight Mass" (at Christmas). "It was before any of our churches in Baltimore had it and Mother Adelaide invited me to come to the Convent for it. There were two or three other lay people there and the service and music were so beautiful I shall never forget it. I went a couple of other times and then Mount Calvary began to have it . . . and around that time the Sisters moved to the country."

The Sisters moved in the summer of 1917 to Orange Grove, Catonsville, where there had been for years a Country Home for Children, the work of a committee of ladies in Baltimore. The Sisters had worked there for a few years in the early days. In 1916, it was decided to close the Home, and the committee gave the whole property unconditionally to the All Saints Sisters. At that time this consisted of a large frame building and several acres of garden. It had long been felt that a Mother House in the country was greatly needed, and this gift was accepted with gratitude. The community, however, was not strong enough to maintain another Branch House; so it was decided to move to Orange Grove and put the city Convent up for sale.

The frame house at Orange Grove had, of course, been built to lodge groups of children, and for summer use only; it had no heating plant and only an uncertain water supply. It was a good frame building with a wide porch all around the ground floor. The front door opened into a large hallway. Opening into that were two dormitories—one became the Chapel, the other was partitioned off to serve the Novitiate—and a dining room, which became the refectory, but with a section cut off to provide a wafer-room. As what is now entitled the Altar Bread Department then consisted of one Lay Sister, one baking machine and one cutting machine, a section cut off from the dining room gave adequate if not ample space. On the second floor were seven single rooms, promptly given over to the invalids, and two long dormitories. One of the dormitories was given to the Choir Sisters, the other to the Lay Sisters; the farther section of each was curtained off for a Community Room, and the remainder divided into cells. Above, there were three large attics and a closet. The kitchens were at the back.

The move brought great difficulties, and the first days are remembered as a struggle, with willing but incompetent helpers for the outside work, and inexperienced Sisters learning to gather fruit and vegetables, husk corn, and tend chickens. Yet they were happy days, one who went through them writes, "full of delight in country air and sunshine, and always looking forward."

The gift of the property had been quite unconditional, yet the Reverend Mother felt that, considering the source, there should be some work for children there. So it was decided to buy the adjoining stone cottage (a purchase which had a secondary advantage, for it was awkward to have strangers living so near) and to prepare it for the younger children from St. Barbara's Home. The bungalow on the opposite hill was bought later.

It proved to be more difficult to sell the property in Baltimore than had been anticipated; and before it found a buyer, the improvised Convent at Orange Grove burned to the ground. It was the Saturday after Easter, April 10, 1920. A spark from the furnace chimney fell on the shingled roof, and by

the time the blaze was discovered, about half-past eight in the evening, there was no hope of saving the building. The fire engines came promptly, but there was not water enough to be of any use. The most that could be done was to salvage the furniture from the ground floor. It was due to a neighbor, Mr. Thomas Hays, from across the river, that the stone bungalow was saved; he spread blankets on the roof and kept them wet with buckets of water handed up to him by the boys of the Donaldson School. By 10:30 p.m. the whole of the frame building was gone.

From that April night of 1920 until February two years later, the stone bungalow, named St. Gabriel's Home, had to serve double duty as a Convent and a Children's Home. The number of children was reduced to 10, and some of the Sisters were sent to the Branch Houses in Baltimore. It was hard to find accommodation even for the Sisters who were needed to run the house; and the wafer-room had to find refuge in the basement of the priest's cottage.

One can, if one chooses, see in this series of events a hand guiding the community into a metamorphosis. The retreat from the city was now followed by the building of the first section of the present Convent. It would probably not have been begun until much later if the fire had not occurred. By another touch of providential care, a legacy which Father Robert Hitchcock Paine had left subject to a life interest for his sister-in-law became available to the community in this year. This, and many small gifts from generous and self-sacrificing friends, enabled the Sisters to build without incurring a debt. So Father Paine's generosity really built both the Baltimore and the Catonsville Convents.

In this time of fragmentation and metamorphosis, the Holy Spirit guided the community to follow large ideas. The architect, Mr. Henry White, drew up plans for the full Convent much as it now stands: a building quite impractical for the Sisters in the 1920's either to erect or to maintain. The question was what section of the whole should be built, as a beginning, and the architect suggested a central section with the east wing, to which the other wing and the Chapel could be added later. The Sisters voted unanimously to omit the east wing, minimizing their living space, and to build the Chapel at once—a Chapel spacious and serenely lofty. It dominated the small block containing the Sisters' cells, library, workrooms, kitchen, and refectory, and declared to all comers the central Presence and purpose of the house.

The cornerstone was laid by Bishop John Murray on June 25, 1921. On February 14, 1922, all the Sisters moved in. A Postulant who had been waiting for admission was received the following day. It had been a wet winter, and the ground trampled by the workmen was a sea of mud. Access to the new building was by plank bridges and ramps. This was still the case on May 4, when the Chapel and Convent were formally blessed; but, despite rain and mud, that was a glad occasion shared by many friends. When rain pelted down at the very time when the procession should have formed for the blessing of the burial ground, Bishop Murray rose to the occasion. Coming into the middle of the sanctuary, he said, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. We cannot go down to



the burial ground at this time: but we will offer the prayers of benediction for it here, blessing it in spirit." And so it was done.

For us, 50 years later, it requires a real effort of imagination to realize the relationship of the Convent to the surrounding world in the 1920's. To go into Baltimore, it was customary to walk to the end of the trolley line in Catonsville, though on occasion, one of the outside men might drive in with the horse and wagon. In wet weather, a Sister would tie her rubbers on firmly, with good strong cord, before setting out on that walk along the unsurfaced road: the clay mud had a way of sucking off rubbers that were not firmly attached. Six days a week, one of the Sisters walked down the hill and across the Patapsco River by the swinging bridge to deliver and bring back the mail which came by the train to Ilchester. In freezing weather, it was advisable, for this duty, to attach "creepers" to one's footgear—metal cleats that bit into the icy hillside. To many eyes, the Sisters must have appeared utterly isolated.

To this period belongs a bit of the community's folklore: Two of the Sisters attending a meeting at Mount Calvary Church, where the speaker's topic was the Religious Life in the Anglican church, heard him say, after he had described several of the women's communities, "And then there are the All Saints Sisters of the Poor, but we need not spend any time on them, for they are dying out."

Mother Adelaide Frances saw one more building project carried through before she resigned in 1927. Since the opening of the new Convent, the work with children at St. Gabriel's Home—the original stone cottage, enlarged by a new wing and a new playroom—had been carried on, with children who were all in one sense or another in need of special care. Now, a generous legacy from Miss Sydney Price, who had been one of the philanthropic group sponsoring the original Country Home for Children at Orange Grove, and had also been an Associate of the community, built a new St. Gabriel's Convalescent Home just inside the gates. It was blessed and opened on Ascension Day, May 26, 1927. There the Sisters and their staff could care for 24 girls, mostly heart cases and rheumatic-fever victims, who were in those days required to face months and years of absolute rest, so difficult for children.

The new St. Gabriel's left the stone cottage vacant, and one of the new Mother's—Mother Catherine Angela's—first decisions was to move St. Barbara's Home from Baltimore into it. St. Barbara's was moved more frequently than any of the other works. Since 1920 it had been housed in a beautiful but unsuitable—and expensive to maintain—property, the Causeway. The Causeway had been given to the community just after the Sisters moved to Orange Grove. Because the donors, Mr. and Mrs. Julian White, had been such good friends to the community for many years, and because Mr. White so evidently wished to preserve his boyhood home intact, the Sisters had struggled with the difficulties of location, the inevitable remodeling, and the expensive repairs. But now it was decided to surrender the battle, sell the property and bring the children to Orange Grove. It was St. Barbara's last move. A generation of girls grew up in the stone cottage under the tulip poplars, and their letters and visits prove that they have those days in loving

memory. The calibre of most of these girls belies the common fallacy of the inferiority of "institutional" care.

Mother Catherine Angela died on August 19, 1932, before her second term of office ended. She was succeeded by Mother Laura, who served as Reverend Mother until 1950. It fell to Mother Laura to see another phase of the metamorphosis accomplished. The works which had served God in His children in Baltimore were, one by one, closed. A diminishing number of active Sisters led to the decision to give up St. Katharine's Home for Colored Girls in 1935. The Sisters left the house on July 3, after the children had been placed in private boarding homes. Four years later, a combination of factors, including shortage of staff, buildings that with age became inadequate, new state requirements for education and housing, and the awareness that many other sources of aid were now available to these needy ones, brought about the closing of St. Mary's Home in Baltimore and St. Barbara's at Orange Grove.

It is said that the Sisters, in the days of their city work near the great Baltimore hospitals, when medicines and procedures were being tried and tested, made medical history in their assiduous care of their little charges suffering from some of the lesser-known but serious diseases. The last horse-and-buggy doctor in Baltimore, Dr. A. Lee Ellis, left the greater part of his estate to St. Gabriel's Home, the country descendant of these early urban works.

In 1933 the division into Lay and Choir Sisters was dropped. The few Lay Sisters, all elderly, chose to continue in the ways they were accustomed to. But all aspirants were now received as aspirants to the Choir Novitiate.

In 1938, when a small wing was added to the southeast corner of the Convent, it provided not only a new and badly needed refectory in the basement, a Community Room on the ground floor, and workrooms on the top floor, but also on the second floor, close to the new luxury of an elevator, was added a group of rooms which became the first Guest Wing.

For new work was already taking shape within the Convent. The community had always offered an opportunity for Associates and other friends to make a three-day retreat once each year. Soon after the new Convent was built, the women of the diocese were invited to attend informal Quiet Days. These continued until World War II. During this period a leaflet of intercessory prayer was compiled and circulated far and wide.

When the war ended and people were free to travel again unrationed, the Quiet Days were resumed. On a more formal basis, with more silence, and usually with a priest as conductor, Quiet Days spaced through the months from November to May became a valued feature of diocesan life. Since 1970, the experimental "Dialogues" or "Symposia," which have been developed recently, have also been presented several times. They have aroused much interest and response, while the desire and need for the opportunity of direct personal waiting upon God, which the silent days provide, continues to be evident.

Meanwhile, individuals in need of spiritual guidance, counseling, or simply the rest that comes from stepping out of the city routine, sought the Sisters more and more. When, in the late 1950's, a legacy made it possible to add



the long south wing, the second floor of it became the new Guest Wing, with its own refectory, library, and sitting room, as well as its own private stair and garden-door. This wing was blessed, in the presence of a throng that filled the Chapel, by our beloved Bishop Visitor, the late Right Reverend Noble C. Powell, on Easter Wednesday, 1960.

Countless visitors have come, trying to piece life together. Among them was the first lady of the Cabinet, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, a devout and devoted Churchwoman and an Associate of the community for 23 years, who stayed frequently at the Convent. She spent hours in prayer and in talking with Mother Laura; and just three weeks before she died she attended the Associates' Retreat, in April 1965. Her eyes were dim, but her intelligence was as keen as ever.

The decade of the 1940's was a period of war and of simmering-down after the war. Our present Mother, Mother Virginia, opened the Novitiate, which had been closed for seven years, when she came to be received as a Postulant in August 1940. Mother Laura, upon reaching the age of 70 in 1949, with her usual greatness of mind and good judgment, would not allow her name to be considered in the triennial election for the Superior of the community, because she felt that a new Superior should be able to merge into this responsibility, having the experience of her predecessor's 18 years as a resource. Sister Jessie, the greatly admired and loved Sister-in-charge of St. Gabriel's Home, was elected. Mother Jessie had less than a year in this office before she lost a heroic battle with cancer; she had to resign in November of 1951, whereupon the Reverend Mother Virginia was elected.

Since that time there has been, on the average, one Profession a year. The work with individuals at the Convent has continued to broaden and deepen.

The work at St. Anna's Home in Philadelphia has gone along steadily, preparing scores of elderly women for the next great life. The atmosphere of this Home is one of unique simplicity, hospitality, and warmth. Housewives, a Deaconess, several college professors, and other professional women, including the lovely Negro who introduced Marian Anderson to the singing world, have called St. Anna's home.

The passage at St. Gabriel's has been a rougher and more varied one. During the 1930's there were plans to double the size of the facilities in the 24-bed Convalescent Home. Letters from doctors requesting this enlargement were many. Dr. Helen B. Taussig, the world-famed co-developer of the "blue-baby operation," was the director of the medical program at St. Gabriel's, a regular visitor at the Home, and a personal friend of the Sisters. Children came from all over the world either to be built up for this life-saving operation, or to convalesce from it. In time, however, other facilities nearer the metropolitan area were developed, and the introduction of antibiotic drugs mercifully cut down the bed-rest time for patients at the Home, so the space there was not merely adequate, but was not being fully used. We are proud to say that the Home was fully integrated in 1951; and there never had been a stipulation as to creed. In fact, Episcopalians were always in the minority among the patients.

Since a children's Convalescent Home was no longer needed, the Sisters began searching for a work in which St. Gabriel's could serve children in

another way. The crying need, after some investigation, seemed to present itself in the field of mental retardation. St. Gabriel's was set up as a pilot project, a small boarding school for the trainable mentally retarded. In connection with this work it was soon found that a counseling program for the patients' families was an essential, because the home toward which the child was being pointed had to develop its responsibility in relationships, as well as the afflicted child, or the rehabilitation would be a failure, and regression would be the order of the day.

The Sisters, through prayer, patience, and love for these mentally retarded little ones, have redeemed scores of persons from a life of seemingly hopeless vegetation for themselves, bondage for their families, and unrewarding work for the staff of their ultimate custodial-care facility. Children have been equipped with glasses, hearing aids, and braces. Intelligence quotients have been raised as much as 20 points.

One little girl, Evelyn, whose mother snuffed out her cigarettes on her face, was made over by her stay at St. Gabriel's and adopted by a foster family. Another child, Leslie, who came to the Home acting and looking less than human, developed into an attractive child. She had the acumen to inform the Sister-in-charge one day that she planned to be a nurses' aide when she grew up. Sister said that she was pleased to hear it, and hoped that she would work at St. Gabriel's. Leslie responded that this was not her wish, because she wanted weekends off!

With the assistance of a speech-therapist, several children have learned to talk. The children enjoy swimming, bowling, and camping experiences through the year, and a summer program is offered annually. In connection with this work, such needs were discovered that supplying food and clothing, sometimes to families of the children, sometimes to other persons in need, has become a continuing part of it.

On the Feast of Christ the King in 1967, an addition to the east wing of the Convent was blessed. This provided new quarters for the Altar Bread Department, a Scriptorium and card shop (a work that has grown amazingly in the last few years), a larger Community Room, a new sewing room, and an infirmary where our Sisters are nursed until their final offering of life to Him whom they have loved and served to the end.

The Convent as well as St. Anna's Home has a group of devoted Associates, and each has its Corporation of faithful businessmen who have advised on the business transactions through the years.

We have also been blessed with faithful resident Chaplains at the Convent. Father Sturges Allan of the Order of the Holy Cross, our Chaplain General in the early 1920's, was responsible for the name of our Hermitage, the Holy Cross Hermitage, which has for the greater number of its years been the home of a resident Chaplain from the Society of St. John the Evangelist (the Cowley Fathers). The longest tenure so far is that of our present Chaplain, Father Earle Hewitt Maddux, S.S.J.E., who wrote or revised several of his publications in the Hermitage.

However, the first long-term tenant of the Hermitage was not a Religious. Father Edward de S. Juny holds a special place in the memories of the older Sisters. He served as resident Chaplain from 1919 to 1938. Father Juny was an



artist in many ways, tending a beautiful garden around the Hermitage. He fashioned a cross for the burial-ground rood, and procured the corpus from a benefactor in France. Father Juny himself was a benefactor to the community. Mother Laura and the Sisters cared for him to the end, and he was buried in the burial lot of the family of one of our Sisters, at St. John's, Worthington Valley.

Father Allan, O.H.C., had been succeeded as Chaplain General briefly by Father Harrison, who was in turn succeeded by Father W. K. Damuth. In 1939 Father Damuth resigned. The Father Superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist was elected and consented to serve. Until his retirement in 1969, Father Granville Mercer Williams, S.S.J.E., continued as the community's Chaplain General. He preached and officiated at the Clothing of our present Mother in 1941 and officiated at her installation as Mother Superior in November 1951. The community has as its present Chaplain General Father Williams' successor as Father Superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Father Alfred J. Pedersen.

Each House of the community has had its seeming miracles. There were many times when the balances were very close but, usually in the nick of time, the Divine help came or shone through. Whenever building was needed, the directing legacy came and guidance was known.

On one occasion, the road needed repair, especially that part in front of and leading to St. Gabriel's Home. The potholes of that particular winter had been deep, and they were becoming deeper. So in July estimates were procured, and they were very high. Nevertheless the contract was signed, sealed, and ready for the afternoon mail, when a visitor came to talk with our Reverend Mother. Mid-afternoon on a hot July day is not usually the time for a stroll, but Mother and her guest probably thought it couldn't be warmer walking, so they walked up toward St. Gabriel's and were met by a road-tarring machine and all the accouterments. Upon asking who had given the order and which company they represented, Mother learned that it was the state road-repairing crew who were resurfacing Hilton Avenue. The foreman said that he thought the St. Gabriel's road seemed to be in poor condition and that he could never forget the kindness of the Sisters to his little heart-patient daughter; this was his thank-offering. Needless to say, the prepared contract was not mailed. This was just one more instance of the Providence of God, as wide as the universe and as particular as potholes.

ALL SAINTS Convent, December, in the year of our Lord 1972. "One-hundred years ago," we say, "our Sisters came to the United States, to Baltimore."

One-hundred years. And what are we like now? Not quite as we were then. Not quite as we were yesterday. Not quite as we shall be tomorrow. The timbers of the *Celtic*, the ship that was less than a year old when it brought Sister Helen, Sister Serena, and Sister Winifred across the Atlantic, have long since vanished. Nowadays our visiting English Sisters do not arrive unheralded; the tidings come by transatlantic telephone, and the Sisters arrive by jet plane. Friendship Airport is just five miles from the Convent, as the jetliner flies, and we pay for this convenience by having to remove daily a light layer of soot, as well as by occasionally having to say an Office in

competition with the roar of a plane coming in for a landing.

The big bell, St. Dunstan, has suffered changes. Cracked and recast, it has returned to the belfry to ring joyfully to the glory of God before every Office. And the smaller Angelus bell now lacks its echo: for years, whoever rang the Angelus listened for the other bell ringing across the Patapsco River, and took pleasure when the timing coincided; but the Sisters of Notre Dame, too, have undergone changes, and that convent bell rings no more.

Our new wing is hardly thought of as the "new" wing any longer; the last strip of raw earth behind it is now a bed of petunias. The sapling that Mother Catherine Angela planted has grown into a full-sized tulip-poplar, while the oak that stood guard on the slope outside St. Gabriel's wall has been cut down. The Sister who remembered the unheralded arrival of Sister Elspeth has died since that page was written, and her body lies next to Sister Elspeth's in the burial ground which Bishop Murray blessed from the Chapel on that pouring dedication day. They are watched over by the crucifix that Father Juný gave. The crucifix is scarred now, scarred by the licking flame of a forest fire. The fire fighters, true to their duty, were working to contain the fire from the perimeter, and the crucifix almost went; only Mother's urgent personal pleas persuaded them to turn and save it.

So the flow of change goes on. The Novices who walked in the burial procession in their white veils now wear the black veils of professed Sisters. If one work ends, a door opens for new work to begin. If an era is gone—

But is it ever gone? Or does it live on, in some hidden way that we occasionally glimpse and wonder at?

It was the hour for Compline, Friday, August 13, 1971. A Sister slipped into Chapel and knelt beside the Reverend Mother's stall to whisper. Mother rose quietly and went out. On the western lawn, another Sister was talking with a strange figure. When the two Sisters, on their way to Chapel, had turned to see what caused the frenzied barking of our little dog, Brigit, they had been puzzled as to whether this was a man or a woman. The tall, well-built figure wearing blue-jeans belted by a chain appeared to be surveying the land through black glasses. The eyes shaded by the glasses were set in a swarthy countenance, topped by black straight hair held back by an Indian-band. Perhaps the eyes were straining to see through the dusk (and the superfluous dark glasses) some landmark of years gone by, for this person had been here before.

Upon Mother's gentle inquiry, they discovered that the visitor had lived in St. Barbara's Home, that she had known early Sisters whom the present questioners knew only by reputation. Perhaps the shaded eyes enabled this former girl of St. Barbara's Home, which once stood on these grounds, to span the 41-year interval with a protected gaze which filtered in the strange newness gradually. She had loved those earlier members of the community, most of whom are no longer living. She went on to say that when she and her mother, having left a burnt-out home in Laramie, Wyoming, had arrived in Baltimore—walking the last 30 miles because their money ran out—it was only to find that there were no friends or relatives remaining; but she was sure that the Sisters would be there. So they had trudged on to Catonsville, the 82-year-old mother walking with the aid of her daughter and a cane.



*Grateful acknowledgement is made to Miss Marie L. Barnes, a much-loved and esteemed Associate and friend who proofread the written text of this book and was responsible for all of the contemporary pictures contained herein.*

*Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*







